tained nave than the window either circular or in which the circle is the prominent object.

Some of the most admired French fronts have also a great prevalence of horizontal lines carried through the two towers. Notre Dame is a known instance, as far as I recollect, Amiens, Abbeville, Troyes, Sens, and many others may be referred to, to shew the prevalence of the taste. I am by no means disposed to treat as a fault the almost Grecian ground plan of many of these buildings, but it certainly tends to produce a form in the profile of which horizontal lines shall be conspicuous. Now in the great breadth of the west front of York, though some may disapprove the low pitched roof, or others the general proportion, yet the lines of buttress and window preclude any such effect. Salisbury, though without towers, is in some degree open to it. Lincoln is worse than any French building, but the fault is in the Norman work.

In richness and depth of moulding, and in the progress of roof tracery, I believe that foreign buildings are oftener behind what would be suitable to the general advance of enrichment than English. Canterbury has much which I do not think English in character.

If a horizontal effect has been often directly given to French fronts, an opposite cause has in some admirable German buildings impaired the effect of the division into bays vertically divided. The office of the buttress with pinnacles not only to be the truthful index to the essential support of a Gothic building, but to carry up the eye in vertical lines, and to divide the structure to the eye according to its enclosed parts, as admirably arranged on the north aisle at Winchester, cannot be overrated. But such is its office, and if from its too great projective proximity, and want of set-off, the line of buttress form to the eye the outline of the building, as occurs in the glorious Cathedral of Cologne, it veils instead of exhibiting the form and character of the contained spaces.

The great height, and consequently relative narrowness, of the parts of this structure, has much tended to this effect; but where there is much flat wall often full of highly enriched parts, but still one wall with many enrichments instead of a series of bays grouped into one harmonizing whole. This often, with a narrow strip of window too insignificant in breadth to give individual character to the several bays, is, I believe, seen to prevail in the architecture of Nurenberg. It is more necessary to be guarded against, as it is the very fault into which many of our recent attempts have fallen. They have walls pierced with windows, they have sometimes three windows under one gable, which never can satisfy the eye, though it may not know the nature of the objection.

I must regard the ostentatious disproportion of the most celebrated steeples of Germany to the rest of the building as a fault. I can hardly regret that Ulm has never been carried up, yet who can object to Freyburg, completely as it overpowers the church.

Yet more questionable is the gorgeous open-work of Strasburg and others of these structures. A pinnacle, which is an excrescence, may be open, but not a leading member of the edifice itself, which ought to resist the weather and shoot off the rain; and there is a further objection where the tower is crowned with a spire — a spire, whose silent finger points to heaven, has that silence broken over by the beautiful addition of crockets. How much more by a surface broken up in all its parts. I believe in all these points the prevalent taste in English architecture has the advantage in purity. It is no part of my object to attempt any comparision in point of positive excellence.

NAMES OF STREETS.—A correspondent of the *Morning Herald* makes the following useful suggestion. When abroad I observed a practice, particularly at Liege, which, if adopted in our large towns, might, I think, be attended with beneficial results. It is simply to have the name of each street on one pane of glass, transparent, in the first lamp at each end of every street. It may be remembered what confusion there was last winter when the fogs set in, by people losing their way in the streets, and being misdirected by pickpockets and other designing persons.

DECORATIONS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

SIR,—No one comes forward to release the Royal Commission from the dilemma in which your correspondents shew them to be placed. The Commissioners can alone extricate themselves by doing justice to the English decorators, and giving them a fair trial, as they appear to be doing with the painters and sculptors. And unless they do so they have only to choose upon which horn of this dilemma they are to be impaled; whether they will consent to be reproached with breach of faith to the decorators, or submit to have their power and influence set at nought, and their intentions frustrated.

The statements made in your columns by Mr. Pugin and Mr. Crace were ingeniously framed, so as to let it be inferred that Mr. Barry makes the designs of all the ornaments both for the carved and painted decorations; Mr. Pugin being his draughtsman for the carved work, and Mr. Crace for the painted work. Mr. John Crace's declaration, that he drew with his own hands the sketches of Mr. Barry, is calculated to excite some apprehension for the execution of the painted decorations amongst those who are conversant with Mr. Crace's powers of delineation; and though it is possible that Mr. Crace may have taken lessons in drawing lately, so that his performances may no longer elicit such shouts of laughter from his foreign artists as they used to do, still the difference between Pugin and Crace is rather too great for their performances to be on a level. If Mr. Barry finds it necessary to engage such valuable assistance as Mr. Pugin's for the carved work, where the feeling and skill of the carvers would supply some deficiency; how much more important is it to have the working drawings for the painters made by a masterly draughtsman.

Mr. Crace's statement, that "not a single foreigner is or has been engaged upon the decorations of the new House of Lords," is at variance with Mr. Pugin's observation in his letter to Mr. Herbert on the School of Design, that, in consequence of not finding English artists competent, he was obliged to send for decorators from abroad. And since it is part of Mr. Pugin's duty to engage the most skilful workmen, it is surprising that he should never have thought of those especially recommended by the Royal Commission. Mr. Barry professes to prefer practical men, and regrets that the Commission did not confine the competition to working artists; yet the first thing he does is to employ a dealer in decorations—telling Mr. Goodison that there is nothing worthy of his ability in the House of Lords!

The architect, of course, ought to have the control of the building, so far as regards the general character and effect of the decorations; but surely the details should be left to the decorative artists to invent. It is for the decorator to send in his designs, and for them to receive the architect's sanction; but there should be no need for the architect to design every scroll or ornament, nor do more than suggest to the decorator, and exercise a veto over his designs. An accomplished, practical decorative artist should be a clever designer, draughtsman, and painter; able to conceive the plan of a decoration and fill in the details, with a knowledge beforehand of the effect of the whole when completed. But *there is no such artist employed in the House of Lords.* It is all done by guess, bit by bit. There is no complete design settled before the work is begun, as there ought to be; but first, this notion is tried, then that, and then another.

The ceiling is moulded in compartments; and these are filled with decorations. Now, I have heard for a fact, that as many as forty different designs have been made for one compartment before the architect was satisfied; and then, when the work had been proceeded with, the effect proved disappointing; and there was a change from coloured figures to gold, or from diaper to plain grounds.

Then the ornaments, instead of being executed on the ceiling, are painted on strained linen, and stuck up afterwards! And this in a national work that is to last for ages! But that plan is most convenient for the jobbing patchwork that is being perpetrated; when a design for the compartments is settled, one is finished in colours, and a set of mechanics are employed to copy it from pounced outlines. Their work will, of course, have all the tame, timid, characterless servility of copyists afraid to go beyond the tracing, and even to come up to the line. And this is the sort of work that is to adorn the House of Lords!

But if the new Houses of Parliament are to be made a *cento* of old Gothic patterns, where is the promised encouragement for British talent? Why are not Messrs. Collman, Johnstone, and Goodison—who are all designers, though only the latter is a practical painter also—why are not these and other decorators competent to invent and execute, allowed the opportunity of exercising their talent? Your correspondent "Justice," speaks disparagingly of Mr. Rogers as a carver, but I am personally acquainted with his talent as a designer, and his skill as a carver. I pride myself on possessing a little specimen of his work that he executed for me more than twenty years ago, that is equally beautiful for taste and execution. Besides, Sir, we want directing minds as well as skilful hands in such a building as this.

Since the Government has sanctioned the very laudable scheme of making this building a monument of the present state of the arts of the country, it behoves those in authority to see that this purpose is accomplished; and that the best talent the country possesses is employed in contributing to it. This will be done in the case of painters and sculptors; why should it not be done in the instance of decorators? The talent of Grinling Gibbons was brought to light by Sir Christopher Wren in St. Paul's. Did that great architect fetter the fertile fancy and consummate skill of the famous carver in wood and stone? No, he gave scope for the genius that he fostered and appreciated. Let us hope his example will be followed in the Parliament Houses.

TRUTH.

LESS NOISE AND MORE SAFETY.

IT is very desirable that guards should be able to communicate with the driver of a train while it is travelling. Practical men are well aware that cords, flags, or signal lights, can never be depended upon, and even whistles under existing circumstances are perfectly useless for this purpose. The most practicable plan is to reduce the noise of a train; it is well known that while steam is blowing off from a safety valve (which is nearly always the case when an engine is running), engine-drivers are quite unable on account of the great noise thereof, to hear any other sounds beyond those made by their engines. It has been proposed instead of letting the surplus steam escape from the valve directly into the open air, that it be made to pass from the valve through a gradually enlarged tube and allowed to escape upwards through an aperture of about the same diameter and height as an engine chimney; this plan would cause the steam to expand very considerably before striking the external air, and would consequently produce comparatively little noise; were this method adopted, it is the opinion of several practical men that engine-drivers would then have no difficulty in hearing a guard's whistle provided the guard was seated upon one of the foremost carriages.

As respects the guards, tho one placed near the end of a long train cannot at present make the front guard hear even a very powerful whistle, owing to the excessive noise of the carriage wheels, but this difficulty may be obviated by enclosing the sides of the wheels, as before mentioned in our pages, so as to confine a quantity of sawdust in contact with their spokes; sawdust having the effect of enabling them to roll without noise.

COMPETITION FOR LAYING-OUT GROUND, RICHMOND.—The Richmond vestry have awarded the premiums for laying out the land at Queen's-road, Richmond. The first to Mr. Edward Sherrard Cole (in Mr. Mocatta's office), and the second to Mr. Gifford, of Pimlico. Several architects of standing were competitors.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON.—The classes for civil engineering and architecture will be re-opened on Wednesday, the 15th of next month.

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